

16 January 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: Inspector General, US Army
SUBJECT : More Details on an Alleged Fabrication
THROUGH : Inspector General, CIA
ATTACHMENT

1. The attachment, a copy of which you received on 11 January 1973, alleged the fabrication of intelligence statistics by the US Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV). The allegations centered on incidents which took place just before and during an Order of Battle conference held in Saigon in September 1967.

2. This memorandum brings to your attention two pieces of hearsay evidence which suggest the alleged misrepresentations may have extended over a longer period of time.

3. The first piece of such evidence gives rise to the possibility that the alleged fabrications may have been well underway even before the conference in Saigon in September. It consists of a conversation I had with a CIA official at Agency headquarters in Langley Virginia in August 1967. The official told me that Colonel Hawkins -- MACV J-2's Order of Battle (OB) chief then on temporary duty to Washington -- had just informed him in the CIA cafeteria that the Colonel thought that the Viet Cong Table of Organization and Equipment (TO/E) for their service force in South Vietnam called for a complement of 100,000 men. (The VC service force was one of the OB's four components).

Since VC units were then running at about 70% of TO/E, according to Col. Hawkins, this would suggest that he believed the Vietnamese Communists may have had some 70,000 service troops in the South. However, the figure the Colonel gave in the cafeteria was in sharp contrast with the number he put forth as MACV's position at an official intelligence gathering on the same day on the CIA's seventh floor. MACV's official position -- upheld by the Colonel and by an Air Force General identified to me as the Deputy Chief of MACV J-2 -- was that the number of VC service troops lay in a range of from 18,000 to 30,000

4. The difference between the numbers given privately in the cafeteria and advanced officially on the seventh floor suggest the Colonel may have been under orders as early as August to keep the OB artificially low. (See Paragraph 9 of the Attachment for a similar occurrence.) Unfortunately, when I visited the Colonel in Mississippi last spring, I neglected to query him on this point.

5. The second piece of hearsay evidence leads me to believe that the alleged fabrications may have continued well past September. Here is why. A U.S. Army officer told me in early 1968 an anecdote concerning the behavior of Lieutenant McArthur, mentioned in Paragraph 5 of the Attachment. Assigned to conduct research on Viet Cong Guerrillas -- another of the OB's four components -- Lieutenant McArthur was supposedly restive already over his role at the OB conference in September. Then in the following months -- probably October, perhaps November and December as well -- the Lieutenant was ordered to lower even further the number of Guerrillas as listed in the official OB. At some point towards the end of 1967 the Lieutenant refused, and protested vigorously through his chain of command at MACV J-2.* Because of his

*Colonel Hawkins was no longer in the chain of command. After the conference in Saigon early in September, he was transferred to Fort Holabird, Maryland.

protests, the Lieutenant was removed from researching VC Guerrillas, and transferred from MACV headquarters. So goes my recollection of the anecdote. A possibly related piece of evidence is the fact that the number of Guerrillas listed in the MACV OB declined in October, November, and December 1967.

6. Obviously, I cannot vouch for either piece of hearsay evidence. However, they would be easy enough to check.

7. Finally, I would like to underline again what I think of Colonel Hawkins. I regard him now, as I did in 1967 and 1968, as an honest and able officer put in an unfortunate position by orders from above. It seems to me that he did his best to live with his position by always being honest in private on matters of substance. In fact, his information on the Viet Cong force structure and on the inner workings of the MACV Order of Battle were a major contribution to CIA studies written after the Tet offensive.

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8. I hope to hear from you at your earliest convenience.

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CIA Hqs.

Copy to: Inspector General, CIA